

## Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-14

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

USDEL JEC PARIS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMEMBASSY MANILA

CINCPAC

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E. O. 11652 N/ A

TAGS: PFOR, XC, US

SUBJECT: APRIL 26 INDOCHINA PRESS SUMMARY

1. EXTENSIVE COVERAGE OF WH ANNOUNCEMENT THAT SULLIVAN  
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AND THACH WILL MEET IN PARIS FRIDAY TO PREPARE FOR HAK-  
THO TALKS, EXPECTED IN MID- MAY, ON C- F VIOLATIONS.  
SEVERAL NOTE BRAY' S REMARK MEETINGS ARRANGED ON U. S.  
INITIATIVE. KEAT ( SUN) AND WP' S KILPATRICK AND GETLER

SAY MAJOR U. S. OBJECTIVE WILL BE AGREEMENT TO HALT NVA REINFORCEMENT IN SVN, AND CAMBODIA C- F. GWERTZMAN REPORTS THAT NVN ANNOUNCEMENT, AS AFP REPORTED FROM HANOI, REFERRED ONLY TO SULLIVAN- THACH MEETING; BUT " ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS SAID THERE WAS NO QUESTION" THAT HAK AND THO WOULD ALSO MEET ( NYT).

2. SHELDON ( CSM) SEES MEETINGS DESIGNED TO SALVAGE C- F THAT IS " BEING DANGEROUSLY BATTERED BY VIOLATIONS"; CARTER ( NYDN) ALLUDES TO " CRUMBLING" C- F. MARDER ( WP) SAYS INDOCHINA ACCORD IS DISINTEGRATING AND " CRUMBLING PROCESS HAS TAKEN PLACE LARGELY OUTSIDE OF AMERICAN CONSCIOUSNESS," FOR U. S. PUBLIC " TUNED OUT" ON VN ONCE " EMOTIONAL RELEASE" OF POWS WAS COMPLETED. CONTENTS WH ANNOUNCEMENT OF PREPARATIONS FOR HAK- THO CONCLAVE " ONLY HINTED AT THE REAL PLIGHT" OF VN AGREEMENT; " IT HAS NOT MERELY SPRUNG A LEAK ... THE ENTIRE AGREEMENT IS FOUNDERING ON ITS BASIC PREMISES." ADDS THAT " CORE ELEMENT" IN AGREEMENT WAS " CALCULATED AMBIGUITY," ESPECIALLY ABOUT WHAT WAS TO OCCUR IN INDOCHINA AFTER U. S. WITHDRAWAL AND POW RELEASES. THIS IS NOW CRITICAL DISPUTE WHICH ENDANGERS REMAINDER OF AGREEMENT, AND IS PARTICULARLY VISIBLE RE CAMBODIA WAR AND NVN QUEST FOR POLITICAL ROLE IN SVN.

3. GVN AND PRG HAND EACH OTHER SHARPLY CONFLICTING PROPOSALS FOR POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, THEN EACH QUICKLY REJECTS KEY PROVISIONS OF OTHER' S PLAN AND ACKNOWLEDGES FAILURE TO MEET DEADLINE SET BY PARIS AGREEMENT FOR POLITICAL SETTLEMENT ( AP SUN, PHINQ; UPI, CHITRIB; NYT, LEWIS). IN SAIGON, TRAN VAN LAM ACKNOWLEDGES THAT GVN PROPOSAL WAS ESSENTIALLY RESTATEMENT OF SAIGON' S LONG- STANDING POSITION ON POLITICAL SETTLEMENT ( NYT, TREASTER).

4. NYDN' S VALERY, IN PARIS, CITES BELIEF AMONG DIPLO- UNCLASSIFIED

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MATIC OBSERVERS THAT WHILE FAR APART ON SOME POINTS, PROPOSALS COULD LEAD EVENTUALLY TO SVN PEACE. RANDAL' S PARIS SOURCES SEE " VAGUEST OUTLINE" OF HINT THAT COMMUNIST REFUSAL TO ADMIT NVA PRESENCE IN SOUTH MIGHT BE NEGOTIABLE. " PERHAPS SIGNIFICANTLY," CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS AND REDUCTION IN ARMED FORCES STRENGTH WERE LUMPED TOGETHER IN COMMUNIST PLAN AS SECOND STAGE TO BE DISCUSSED AFTER ALL OTHER CONDITIONS HAD BEEN MET ( WP).

5. GVN WARNS FOREIGN NEWSMEN FACE ARREST IF THEY ENTER VC- CONTROLLED AREAS WITHOUT SAIGON' S PERMISSION. PRESS SPOKESMAN ADDS THAT FURTHER ACTION WILL DEPEND ON WHAT NEWSMEN HAD DONE DURING SOJOURN WITH VC( REUTER, NYT).

6. AFSC SPOKESMAN SAYS NVN MEDICAL SPECIALIST FOUND THAT CHEMICAL DEFOLIANTS USED BY US HAVE BEEN ABSORBED BY FISH, RICE AND SHELLFISH; SAYS NVN FACES CRITICAL HOUSING SHORTAGE BECAUSE OF U. S. BOMBING, AND URGES CONGRESS SUPPORT AID TO NVN ( UPI, WP).

7. U. S. BOMBS HEAVILY NEAR PP. B-52 S NOW FLYING 60 SORTIES PER DAY, EACH PLANE CARRYING 24 TONS. SORTIES REPORTEDLY DIVIDED EVENLY BETWEEN STRIKES ON BORDER BASES FEEDING INTO SVN AND ATTACKS IN SUPPORT OF FANK AT PP AND TAKEO ( SUN, CORDDRY). BOMBERS DROPPED ALMOST 40,000 TONS OF CAMBODIA LAST MONTH, LEVEL THAT MILITARY OFFICIALS SAY PROBABLY REPRESENTS HEAVIEST BOMBARDMENT EVER OF THAT COUNTRY ( WP, KILPATRICK/ GETLER; NYT, FINNEY). MALIK SAYS CAMBODIA HAS RIGHT TO CALL ON U. S. TO DEFEND ITSELF. AND ADDS: " ONE MUST SEE WHY THE AMERICANS HAVE CARRIED OUT BOMBINGS IN CAMBODIA. IT IS BECAUSE FOREIGN TROOPS WERE THERE" ( AP, SUN). SOURCES CLOSE TO CAMBODIA FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM SAY PP HAS ENOUGH RICE FOR MORE THAN 2 MONTHS ( UPI, WSJ).

8. SOUTHERLAND ( CSM), IN PP, CITES DOUBTS OF VETERAN DIPLOMATS THAT NEW GOVERNMENT CAN BRING COUNTRY CLOSER TO NEGOTIATIONS AND PEACE SETTLEMENT. MONITOR' S UNCLASSIFIED

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SAIKOWSKI ADDS THAT DESPITE PP POLITICAL JUGGLING, FOR U. S. " KEY" IS HANOI' S WILLINGNESS RESPOND TO ANTICIPATED EFFORT BY HAK NEXT MONTH TO GET THO WIND DOWN CONFLICT.

9. HAIG TESTIFIES AS SURPRISE USG WITNESS IN PENTAGON PAPERS TRIAL ( NYT, ARNOLD; NYDN, WILSON; AP, SUN). OTHER TOP OFFICIALS INVITED TO TESTIFY INCLUDE AMBASSADORS HABIB AND GREEN ( WP).

10. YEH CHIEN- YING, ADDRESSING SEVERAL HUNDRED GUESTS AT PEKING RECEPTION, ACCUSES U. S. AND SVN OF HINDERING IMPLEMENTATION OF PARIS PEACE AGREEMENT AND DEMANDS END TO U. S. " ARMED INTERVENTION" IN CAMBODIA AND LAOS ( REUTER, WP).

11. PRAMUAL VINIGABHAN, FORMER THAI COLONEL IN POLITICAL ANTI- DRUG UNIT, SENTENCED TO 25 YEARS IN PRISON FOR CORRUPTION INVOLVING DRUG TRAFFICKING. HAD WORKED CLOSELY WITH U. S. NARCOTICS AGENTS AND REPEATEDLY DENIED CHARGES BY U. S. CONGRESSMEN THAT HIGH- RANKING THAI OFFICIALS WERE INVOLVED IN DRUG TRAFFIC ( AP, NYDN).

12. NYT CONSIDERS DECISION TO SEND CHIEF NEGOTIATORS BACK TO PARIS, TO TRY SALVAGE CRUMBLING ACCORDS, WELCOME SHIFT FROM RECENT RECRIMINATIONS AND THREATS.

13. WSJ'S KEATLEY VIEWS HANOI AGREEMENT TO SEND THO BACK TO PARIS AS HOPEFUL SIGN. REVIEW OF, AND MEASURES TO BRING ABOUT, STRICT IMPLEMENTATION OF AGREEMENT PREPARED BY SULLIVAN AND THACH TO BE WORKING PAPER USED WHEN HAK AND THO MEET. HAK WILL BE SEEKING NEW POLITICAL UNDERSTANDINGS WITH THE DRV ABOUT PEACE TERMS. US PROBABLY WON'T DEMAND TOTAL COMPLIANCE, BUT WANTS AVOID LARGE-SCALE VIOLATIONS THAT COULD CAUSE ANOTHER MAJOR OFFENSIVE IN SVN, LAOS OR CAMBODIA. MANY OFFICIALS BELIEVE THAT ALTERNATIVE TO SUCCESSFUL POLITICAL TALKS IS INCREASED US BOMBING, AND ARE CONVINCED THAT PRESIDENT WOULD SEND AIRCRAFT BACK UNCLASSIFIED

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INTO WAR RATHER THAN LET NVN UNDO AGREEMENT.

14. NYDN SAYS IT'S TIME WE HAD SHOUTDOWN PARLEY, AND LET HANOI KNOW AMERICA STILL HAS WILL AND STRENGTH TO SEE THAT LETTER AND SPIRIT OF TRUCE ARE OBSERVED. WOULDN'T HURT TO DO SOME PLAIN TALKING TO PEKING AND MOSCOW - ESPECIALLY LATTER.

15. EVANS AND NOVAK (WP), IN SIAGON, SAY COMMUNIST ICCS MEMBERS HAVE BEEN UNDER SOVIET DIRECTION, ENERGETICALLY TORPEDOING PEACE-KEEPING WITH COLD WAR FERVOR OF 1940 S. US OFFICIALS FEAR WHAT THIS IMPLIES ABOUT SOVIET ADHERENCE TO LIFE-AND-DEATH INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS, INCLUDING ARMS LIMITATIONS. SAY CANADIAN ICCS MEMBERS ARRIVED AS GENUINE NEUTRALS, BUT HAVE BECOME EMOTIONALLY ANTI-COMMUNIST IN REACTION TO HANOI-WARSAW-BUDAPEST COLLUSION. CANADIAN ICCS MEMBERS THINK IT TIME TO LEAVE; NO CANADIAN IN SAIGON DISAGREES AND INDONESIANS ARE COMING TO FEEL SAME WAY.

16. SUN CITES LEE KWAN YEW'S OPINION THAT EVEN IF THE VC GAIN CONTROL OF SVN, AND CAMBODIA AND LAOS FALL UNDER NEUTRALIST OR PRO-COMMUNIST GOVERNMENTS, OTHER SEA NATIONS WOULD HOLD FIRM, AT LEAST AGAINST OUTSIDE COMMUNIST AGGRESSION. SAYS OF DOMINO THEORY: "A FEW DOMINOS CAN WOBBLE AND SOME EVEN FALL WITHOUT BRINGING DOWN THE WHOLE LINE."

17. PHINQ'S MCCARTNEY INTERPRETS PARIS ACTION AS ADMINISTRATION MOVE TO ESCALATE DIPLOMACY, RATHER THAN AERIAL WAR. MANY OFFICIALS BELIEVE HANOI SIGNED AGREEMENT PRIMARILY TO GET US OUT OF SVN, GUESSING PRESIDENT WOULD BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO LEAVE INDOCHINA ALONE ONCE POWS HOME. "RIGHT THERE IS THE RUB."

THOSE IN POLICY- MAKING POSITIONS SAY NIXON FEELS HE HAS TO DEMONSTRATE TO HANOI THAT HE WASN' T SIMPLY BACKING OUT, THAT HE STILL CARES ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS IN INDOCHINA, AND THAT HE INTENDS PRESERVE NON- COMMUNIST GVN.

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18. ESPER ( CHITRIB), IN PP, ATTRIBUTES TO WESTERN OBSERVERS VIEW THAT LON NOL' S DECISION TO BRING HIS CHIEF OPPONENTS INTO GKR WILL HAVE LITTLE OR NO EFFECT ON REGIME' S BLEAK PROSPECTS FOR SURVIVAL BECAUSE COMMUNISTS HAVE UPPER HAND MILITARILY. NUMBER OF WESTERN DIPLOMATS AND MILITARY ATTACHES BELIEVE GKR MILITARY EFFORT IS ON DOWNHILL SLIDE THAT NOT EVEN MASSIVE US AIR SUPPORT CAN STOP. CITES WESTERN ATTACHE AS SAYING THAT NVN ORCHESTRATING ENTIRE OPERATION, ACTING AS ADVISERS AND GIVING FULL LOGISTICS SUPPORT. UNTIL RECENTLY IT WAS WIDELY BELIEVED NVA WAS SPEARHEADING OFFENSIVE.

19. PHINQ' S MCCARTNEY ( APRIL 25) CITES EXPERT WHO FORMERLY SERVED IN WH AS SAYING THAT BECAUSE OF WATERGATE, PRESIDENT IS IN " NO POSITION" TO TAKE STRONG ACTION IN INDOCHINA AGAINST NVN VIOLATIONS OF C- F -- IF HE WISHED. EXPERT ATTRIBUTES LIMITATION ON PRESIDENT' S CAPABILITY TO ACT ON LOSS OF CONFIDENCE; " HE DOESN' T HAVE MOMENTUM OF PUBLIC OPINION BEHIND HIM." ROGERS

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